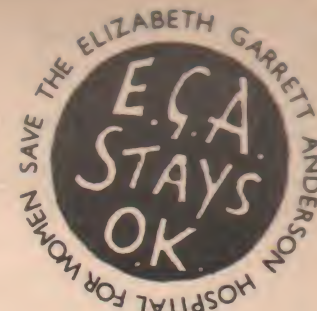


RED WEEKLY

25 NOVEMBER 1976

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CLOSURE!

READ ALL ABOUT IT
ON PAGE 2

LABOUR BANS IRISH PROTEST, EXPELS AGEE

DEFEND FREE SPEECH

Not many heard what Labour's Home Secretary had to say in Trafalgar Square last Sunday. A large section of the crowd was determined that the would-be deporter of Philip Agee and Mark Hosenball should be drowned in protests. This was all to the good.

But a few sentences of Merlyn Rees's speech did manage to reach the ear of reporters, and one was reported the following day in the national press. Attacking the motion passed at the Labour Party Conference on 'No Platform for Racists', Rees said: 'You will drive decent people in the wrong direction if you stop free speech'.

Even for a cynical right-winger such as Rees, that is rather breath-taking. Because freedom of speech for Merlyn Rees is a very movable feast.

If you are a racist, if you are a fascist of the National Front, then your freedom must be preserved. If you are a member of the North of Ireland 'Peace People' then your freedom to sing hymns in Trafalgar Square will be defended at all costs, for you sing in favour of the British Army and the right of that Army to interfere in the affairs of the Irish people.

On the other hand, if you expose the CIA as Philip Agee has, or you report on the activities of South African and Rhodesian spies as Mark Hosenball has, if you dare to raise protests against the role of British imperialism in Ireland, then your freedom to speak is denied.

Already a ban exists on all but the 'Peace People' to speak on Ireland in Trafalgar Square. And now Merlyn Rees's much loved freedom of speech has driven him to ban a 'Peace Through Freedom' rally scheduled to take place before the 'Peace People' leave Speakers Corner this Saturday.

It is not simply a case of the usual Labour Government hypocrisy. This Government is stating its position clearly and shamelessly. Fascists, racists, advocates of the British Army in Ireland can peddle their divisive ideas whenever they wish. But those who stand up for the oppressed peoples in southern Africa, the Caribbean or Ireland are harassed, banned and deported.

This Saturday at Speakers Corner let your voice be heard. The picket on the 'Peace People' has become more than a protest against the right of the Labour Government to interfere in the affairs of the Irish. It has also become a picket for the rights of all sections of the workers movement to organise and to speak.

TORIES LORD IT OVER CUTS

THE HOUSE OF LORDS have contemptuously buried the Bill to nationalise the shipbuilding and aircraft industries alongside the Dockwork Regulation Bill.

The same day, Peter Shore announced the reduction of the rate support grant. This will mean simultaneously a 15 per cent rate rise (25 per cent in Scotland) and a cut in local authority expenditure of over £500 million. Every local authority will now have to resist or face the prospect of trying to force through compulsory redundancies.

Now is a good time to remember the promises made to workers in the name of the Social Contract by Jack Jones, its chief architect.

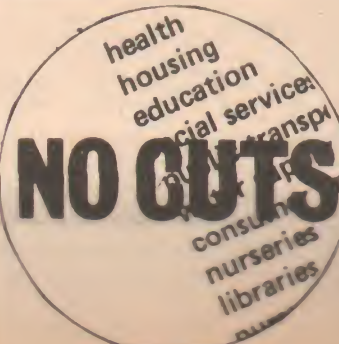
* **Safeguard unemployment by reducing inflation.** Real wages have fallen by 6 per cent, but unemployment is still rising. Inflation over the last three months has shot up to an annual rate of 19.7 per cent.

* **Maintenance of social services.** 50 hospitals face closure in London alone. 20,000 teachers are on the dole queue. Thousands of local and national government workers face the sack.

* **Positive legislation.** Legislation that has been seriously opposed has been blocked through an alliance between the Tories and the House of Lords and a surrender by Callaghan. Legislation like the Equal Pay and Employment Protection Acts has been shot full of loopholes by the tribunal system.

Jack Jones has only one message for the working class: 'Keep Labour in — to keep the Tories out'. But it is Jones's support for the policies of this Labour Government that is bringing back the Tories faster than even Thatcher finds comfortable.

The massive demonstration on 17 November shows that resistance to the cuts is there. The 'left' leaders like Fisher who led that action must be forced to turn that resistance into a fight against the disastrous policies of this Government as a whole — against the Social Contract which gives the working class nothing except the cost of the bosses' crisis.



IMG contingent on 21 November anti-racist demonstration defends Philip Agee's right to free speech.



Part of the massive 17 November anti-cuts demonstration. Story: page 3.

WHICH WAY FORWARD

AFTER 17 NOVEMBER

TWO-AND-A-HALF-HOURS — that's how long it took the 60,000 strong demonstration against the cuts just to move out of Hyde Park last Wednesday. Prominent were the contingents of 12,000 NUPE members, 4,000 NALGO members, 5,000 CPSA members, 3,000 NUT members, and 15,000 students.

There can now be no doubting the massive opposition to cuts amongst workers in the public sector, and their willingness to fight back. Many members of NALGO and NUPE had gone on strike to be on the march, despite their leaders' failure to make an outright call for such action.

This was the most impressive mass action of the workers movement against the policies of the Labour Government that we have seen so far. But the demonstration also showed the weakness of the movement against the cuts. For although there were contingents from the Kent and South Wales miners, the docks and the AUEW, unions from outside the public sector were mostly conspicuous by their absence.

CALL

The call of the Labour Party National Executive Committee for support for the demonstration only resulted in 28 Labour Party and Young Socialist banners on the march, and the call of the AUEW resulted in far less. No real mobilisation was undertaken by either executive. It was no wonder, when the seriousness of the AUEW and the Labour Party leadership in opposing the cuts had been put to the test and shown to be lacking, that workers at the rally at the end of the march shouted down Tribune Norman Atkinson, the new treasurer of the Labour Party.

That is also why Alan Fisher of NUPE was greeted by such loud applause at the Central Hall rally. It was NUPE which

moved the resolution passed at the Labour Party conference opposing the cuts, and it was the public sector unions, and particularly NUPE, which had given the lead in building the demonstration that day. But despite the popularity which Fisher achieved with his militant calls for the nationalisation of the banks at that meeting, he was in reality marching that 60,000 strong army to the top of the hill only to march it back down again.

The declaration put to the rally at Central Hall showed what Fisher's leadership really amounted to. Far from mass action for socialist policies, such as the nationalisation of the banks and the opening of the books, it called for unity around TUC policies — import controls to shelter capitalist industry, and planning agreements with the capitalists, all within the framework of the Social Contract.

That is why the 'left' leaders of the public sector unions are calling for the Government to 'change its course'. They want to try to persuade Callaghan that the cuts are too severe, whilst accepting that the working class must pay for the crisis through the Social Contract.

'Got the message, Jim?' was the headline of the *Morning Star* the next day, echoing the words of these lefts. Unfortunately

Jim is more concerned with the message he is getting from the IMF than from the working class. Jim is quite happy to open the books to the IMF, but he has no intention of opening them to the workers.

It will need a campaign of national mass action to end the social contract and force a halt to the cuts. Where the Communist Party trail after the Fisherites, patting them on the back for every good deed, socialists must demand that the lefts mount a real fight. We must demand that they name the date for a day of national strike action. *Red Weekly* calls on its supporters in the public sector to campaign for a day of national strike action in their unions, mount lobbies of their union executives to force home the point, and take up the call in the local and area strikes, such as the Midlands NUPE strike called for 1 December.

This is the next step in building a public sector alliance for mass action to stop the cuts — an alliance that is prepared to take on the Social Contract and the anti-working class policies of the Labour Government. In this way the lack of involvement of workers in other unions can be overcome in the fight against the cuts.



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

Angry Little Ilford teacher demands right to speak at 17 November rally

After the Ball

The *Morning Star* last Thursday commented sourly on the way the great Central Hall rally the previous day ended:

'The meeting ended earlier than intended This was because the chairman, Mr Len Lever of the CPSA, declared the meeting closed when a suspended member of the NUT attempted to take the floor, with the backing of a section of the audience, to raise what appeared to be an internal problem within his union as a

result of which some members had been suspended'.

Well, what really happened?

The scene is Central Hall, Wednesday night. The nth trade union leader is extolling the virtues of an 'alternative strategy' without breathing a word of fighting the Social Contract. Fred Jarvis, General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers, is due next.

Teachers from Little Ilford School, whom he has suspended from the union for striking against the cuts, are waiting to confront him. Perhaps he knows this. At any rate it's Charles Clarke of the National Union of Students, 'representative' of the jobless student teachers, who's wheeled out.

The teachers protest. They want to speak. Chairperson Lever reckons that a much depleted audience will not know what the fuss is about. So he tries to crush them with a quick vote. Democracy!

But the teachers have given out 40,000

leaflets on the demonstration and the message has got through. They win the vote. Fred Jarvis appears like a miracle from the wings, confers with Lever, and the meeting is promptly closed!

The platform troops off and Charles Clarke, pursuing to the end his policy of alliances with the very bureaucracy which is refusing to fight for jobs, dutifully follows them. Only Ernie Roberts, supporter of the National Coordinating Committee Against Cuts in the NHS and of the National Right to Work Campaign, lingers.

He is questioned by a member of the audience: 'Why don't you speak? These teachers have been fighting the cuts and they've been victimised by their own leaders.'

Ernie Roberts replies: 'You have to win the fight in your own union first, then bring it to us. We didn't get any help from you when we were fighting the right wing in the AEU.' And he leaves too. Exit stage right.

About 220 socialist teachers attended an 'Open Conference' last weekend to discuss how best to unite the left in a fight against the policies of the Labour Government and their supporters in the NUT executive.

As a first step the conference was undoubtedly a success — it agreed upon a minimum basis of unity of the left, set up a democratic structure, the Socialist Teachers Alliance, with regular conferences and an elected co-ordinating committee, and agreed to produce a regular journal to agitate for socialist policies and act as a forum of debate within the left. Three important steps were taken beyond the existing IS sponsored 'Rank and File' organisation.

* It created a framework for democratic debate within the left — the first essential for united action in the union.

* It broke from the absurd posturing of 'Rank and File' which set itself up as the

ment's policies and the NUT leadership.

* It set its task as campaigning in the union for united action by all teachers against cuts, in defence of the Little Ilford teachers being victimised by their union, and against the witch-hunt aimed at the William Tyndale teachers.

LONG WAY

In doing this the 'Open Conference' will go a long way towards overcoming the cynicism of socialist teachers about organising in the NUT, which results from the sectarian practices of Rank and File.

The organisation of the left in the union is an issue of concern for all militants

IN FOCUS

The Left and the National Question

Devolution for Scotland hit the headlines again last week when over 70 Labour MPs signed a motion to block any legislation until a referendum is held on the issue. For these worthies, the 'national question' is something which arises in the colonial world like Vietnam and Angola, or as part of the struggle against autocracy, in the shape of the struggle of the Basque nation against Francoist oppression.

But the national struggle in Ireland, the sweeping victory of the Parti Quebecois in Canada and the likelihood of similar victories for the Scottish National Party in the next General Election have brought the national question into the heart of the so-called 'advanced democracies'.

But there are none so blind as those who will not see. The Labour MPs claim in their motion to the Commons that devolution does 'not appear to enjoy the public support which would justify such a major and irreversible constitutional change.' It was presumably on this basis that Neil Kinnock felt able to share the same television platform as Enoch Powell in arguing against a Scottish assembly last week.

But what underlies the refusal of these MPs to confront the problems raised by devolution? Their real aim is to block and sabotage by any parliamentary means possible the setting up of the Assembly. We say 'parliamentary means' quite deliberately, for behind the motion is the Tribunites' staunch defence of British parliamentary sovereignty. It was this which led them to wave the Union Jack so enthusiastically during the EEC campaign against 'foreign' rule from Brussels. Today the same arguments are being used to counter the 'disunity' of demanding separate Assemblies outside the Palace of Westminster.

This has been taken to its logical but absurd conclusion in Scotland, where the Labour Party's research officer, Alf Young, explained to an incredulous press conference that he now considered the SNP to be a subversive organisation as they were out to 'use the institutions of government for their own ends'.

This parliamentarism leads the Labour lefts to a totally manipulative attitude to democracy, in favour of government imposed from above on the Scottish people. However, this latest manoeuvre looks like ending in a sick joke. The Liberals have threatened to boycott it unless it includes a provision for federalism, the Scottish Labour Party have demanded that any referendum include trade and industry powers for the Scottish Assembly, and the SNP will urge their supporters to vote against if the words 'separation' or 'isolation' are used anywhere. In light of this, such a referendum would be a farce demonstrating nothing except the manoeuvring stupidity of the Tribune group. In fact the SNP are privately delighted, and now cheerfully intend to disregard any result and introduce a new referendum to strengthen the powers of the Assembly as soon as it is set up.

The two SLP MPs were well placed to mount a campaign in the labour movement against the bureaucratic arrogance of the 70 MPs. Instead their response has taken them even further away from the organisations of the working class towards the middle class SNP. 'If the government produce an acceptable Bill on devolution... then they can survive', stated Jim Sillars. 'Acceptable', that is, to the SNP and to the SLP whose votes now apparently form an organised bloc to preserve the 'national' interests of Scotland.

This move can only be disastrous for Sillars and Robertson. In return for trade and industry powers to the proposed Assembly they have promised blanket support for the Government on any vote of confidence. Presumably this would mean a change in their position of voting against the cuts, if the vote was for one of 'confidence' — a high price indeed to pay for the temporary prestige of a parliamentary alliance with the SNP. Unlike much of his membership, Jim Sillars is against actually dissolving his organisation into the ranks of the SNP; but the dividing line between the two parties gets fainter every day.

Any alliance with the SNP is just as useless to the labour movement as is the Tribunites' anti-devolution stance. Despite the different conclusions, both have the same starting point: politics are reduced to parliamentary procedures and backstairs deals.

The Labourites, however left, have no answer to the political problems raised by the disintegration of the United Kingdom under the impact of the social and economic crisis of British capitalism. Their only alternative is either to pretend it isn't happening, or to be driven into the camp of Enoch Powell and the banner of parliamentary sovereignty. All socialists in England should be straightforward in their demand of self-determination for Scotland.

The Socialist Challenge to Labour's Cuts



RED WEEKLY
pamphlet

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NORTH WEST RED WEEKLY CENTRE

By 20 November, £185 had been raised for the North West Red Weekly Centre in Manchester. Donations of £30 from a TASS member and £10 from 'a Rovers supporter — hope this will help to kick the fascists out of Blackburn' boosted the total. A very successful bonfire party raised £27 and a raffle another £35. The winning



Photo: LAURENCE SPARHAM



NO RIGHT OF APPEAL

Philip Agee and Mark Hosenball have no right of appeal against the Home Secretary's decision to deport them. They are merely allowed to 'make representations' (on 29 November) to an advisory panel, whose three members are Sir Derek Hilton, Sir Clifford Jarret, and Sir Richard Hayward.

This body is hardly independent. Hilton, who served in the Special Operations Executive (SOE) during the war, is an old intelligence hand now resting on his laurels and his directorships of such companies as Abbey National.

Jarret served in the Admiralty during the war and was Principal Establishment

Officer in the Civil Service from 1946-50 — again a job not unconnected with British intelligence, since it involves vetting civil service appointments to make sure that no reds get behind the desks in Whitehall.

Hayward does not have such splendid credentials, but even if he has any doubts his two fellow knights will soon put him in his place. In any case, should they somehow advise leniency, Rees is perfectly at liberty to ignore their recommendation!

Clearly only an effective outside campaign can save Agee and Hosenball from deportation.

'The real secrets now are in the minds of people' (Sunday Telegraph, 21 November 1976).

'Liberal England' staggered one step further towards its grave last week. Home Secretary Merlyn Rees, fresh back from giving the green light to the Orange assassins of Maire Drumm in northern Ireland, ordered the deportation of ex-CIA agent Philip Agee and American-born journalist Mark Hosenball.

Apparently they are a threat to the security of the British state.

This excuse is such a transparent fabrication that not a single shred of evidence has been produced to support it. Indeed the law involved, Section 3(5)(b) of the 1971 Immigration Act, doesn't require it. All the stooges of the secret service need do is whisper to Merlyn the MagiCIAN and out they go.

Oh yes, they can 'make representations' to a tribunal of three civil servants — but they'll never know the charges against them, will have no lawyers, and no chance to challenge evidence or witnesses. As usual, British standards of justice will prevail.

ORGY

Not surprisingly, an orgy of speculation as to the reasons for the deportations has ensued in the British press. Did Hosenball's exposure of the South African security police in Britain seal his fate? Or was it what British intelligence was up to in Angola and Uganda?

Perhaps Sir Maurice Oldfield, one time head of Britain's Secret Intelligence Service, blew a fuse on reading in *Time Out* in January that he had apparently resigned over the shelving of plans for a National Security Agency — plans which would have combined army and police

intelligence files with the services of Britain's spy-masters. Then, of course, there was the hasty departure of *Forum World Features* from these shores following its exposure as a CIA front.

The allegations levelled against Agee would be comical but for their deadly serious consequences. Apparently going to the cultural affairs department of the Cuban Embassy proves your collusion with enemy agents. And if you talk to a Russian journalist in a Kensington restaurant about the publication of a book in the Soviet Union that is already available in 17 other countries, then you just have to be working for the KGB.

POINT

More to the point may be Agee's hugely successful recent visit to Jamaica, during the course of which he named nine CIA agents. 150,000 leaflets carrying their names, addresses and even car registration numbers were distributed. CIA attempts to 'destabilise' the island were themselves destabilised with the hasty departure of three agents. Another 500 agents are due to be named in Agee's forthcoming book on the CIA in Europe.

Hatred for Agee has been developing in spook circles for years. His declared aim, as he wrote in the American magazine *Counterspy*, is to disrupt the work of the CIA through 'the identification, exposure and neutralisation of its people working abroad.'

The timing is best explained by the arrival in London of a new CIA station chief, Dr Edward Proctor, and Merlyn Rees' appearance at the Home Office — fresh from a round of repression in the north of Ireland.

It was left to the *Sunday Telegraph* to expose unwittingly the real reasons for the deportation orders. The technology of spying is now so highly developed that there is 'hardly such a thing as a military secret' left. Instead 'the real secrets now are in the minds of people. And the most dangerous threats to security are the "Agents of Influence", the men and women who set out to break down a nation's morale, and destroy a people's will to resist.'

In fact Agee and Hosenball, in their own particular way, are doing exactly the opposite — developing the will to resist an ever increasing encroachment on personal liberties and basic democratic rights. The only difference between them and us is that they are American and can be deported. Now that the thought police are arriving, what fate awaits us 'Agents of Influence' at home?

MICK GOSLING

Both Agee and Hosenball are members of the National Union of Journalists, whose leadership were meeting on Tuesday to discuss action on the case. Meanwhile the union's Magazine Branch voted on Monday night to demand: withdrawal of support for the Government by all Labour MPs in the NUJ unless the deportation orders are lifted; the NUJ to withdraw from all talks on a Press Charter unless all parties agree to protest at the deportations; a one-day national stoppage by union members to coincide with the 'appeal' on 29 November.

BEHIND THE TORY RESHUFFLE

THATCHER'S RESHUFFLE provoked such agitation in the statements of the left MPs that one would think the prison camps were just around the corner.

For the 'lefts', of course, the introduction of the 'hang 'em and flog 'em' brigade into the Tory front benches provides an excellent cover. The slogan 'Fall in behind Callaghan to keep the Tories out' will increasingly be used to justify their capitulations to the Government on the cuts, unemployment and incomes policy.

This is not to say that the occupation of junior posts inside the Shadow Cabinet by Messrs. Biffen, Boyson, Taylor and Churchill does not represent a danger to the working class. It does.

Biffen spelled it out clearly on television. The Tories won the Workington by-election largely on the question of scroungers and unemployment. Biffen sees his role politically as being to split the upper layers of the working class — the skilled, more conservative workers — from the rest of the class.

CUTBACKS

To this end he peddles the economic strategy of Powell — massive cut-backs in social expenditure and money supply, and an end to incomes policy and the effect it has had on flattening differentials.

Because of the fact that these workers have in the past benefited from the exploitation of the colonial countries, it is all the easier to play on the racist sentiments within the

plank of these 'populist' Tory leadership recruits.

But the Tory conference in October, while giving rapturous applause to these sentiments from the platform, adopted Heath's policies in favour of incomes policy, growth and conciliation. Heath's speech last week warning against reliance on red-baiting and witch-hunting scroungers was a warning not to retreat from that programme.

VOTE

But Heath still lacks an answer on how to win a decisive victory in the next General Election. For that the Tories need to win a substantial vote from the English working class. Thatcher's purpose in leaving the top posts in the hands of 'moderate' Tories and recruiting the right wing of the party into junior positions is to maintain the Heathite programme, weld together the middle class base of the Tory Party, and get the votes from Labour.

Thatcher's reshuffle is only part of a shift to the right in all the major parliamentary parties. Tory demands for an end to immigration are upstaged by one of Roy Jenkins' last proposals in the Home Office — a register of dependants. The Tories' outcry on scroungers is upstaged by Ennals' suggestion of cutting unemployment benefit by taxation, and 'left' Stan Orme's promise of more snooping on claimants.

Labour's right-wing policies not only prepare their own downfall — they pave the way for the onslaught



Over 15,000 people marched through central London last Sunday in response to the Labour Party and TUC call for a demonstration against racism. Hundreds of union, immigrant and anti-fascist banners were on show. About a third of the march was made up of black people.

The demonstration was a tremendous response to the growing threat of racism and fascism. That the Labour bureaucracy had called it at all was a tribute to the pressure put on the labour movement by the upsurge of black youth this summer. So it was all the more sick that an Uncle Tom like Lord Pitt was put on the platform to 'represent' black people. His particular brand of reaction was an appeal for black people to join the

police — an appeal rightly greeted with jeers and chants of 'Black Self-Defence'.

At least another speaker, Joan Lester, was a bit more poetic when she recalled the response of the reformists to the growth of the Nazis: 'When they came for the Jews I did not protest, when they came for the communists I did not protest, when they came for trade unionists I did not protest, when they came for me there was no-one to protest.'

But the mealy-mouthed and long overdue 'protests' of the platform as a whole failed to provide either the policies or the means of fighting racism. Only the left contingents on the march took up the chant: 'End All Immigration Controls'.

Trespassers will be persecuted

A conference has been called for this weekend to organise the fight against possible moves to make trespass a criminal offence.

It is likely that the Queen's Speech, opening the next session of Parliament, will include a Bill incorporating the Law Commission's proposals to clamp down on squatting and various forms of industrial action.

At present trespass is only a civil offence, which means that the police are not empowered to intervene in a factory occupation or a squatted house unless a criminal offence has been committed. In practice the police are able to move in on the most spurious grounds; but the new Bill, if passed, would give them sweeping new powers to smash direct action by

holiday. In fact this type of case, greatly played up by the press, has hardly ever happened — as the Home Office itself has been forced to admit.

The five provisions of the Law Commission's draft Bill create offences concerned with the 'threat of violence' (real or imagined) and the possession of offensive weapons. Clauses like these give a free hand for the police to intervene on mere suspicion, while failure to leave premises becomes a criminal offence.

By focussing this Bill on squatters, the Law Commission and Government are attempting to divert opposition by trade unionists. The TUC General Council has fallen for this by opposing only certain provisions of the Bill. In fact the entire Bill is designed to attack not just squatters but also occupations and pick-

necessary not just to explain how the Bill will affect workers, but also to take up the fight to defend squatters' rights and for the TUC to take a position of total opposition to the Bill. Already the Campaign Against a Criminal Trespass Law [CACTL] has the affiliation of ACTT and NUPE nationally as well as many local labour movement bodies.

This support must be extended by fighting for union branches and Constituency Labour Parties to affiliate to CACTL and to build a campaign of opposition to the Government's measures and the TUC's acquiescence in them.

The conference being held this weekend at Reading University is a step forward in that campaign. It will include sessions on Industrial Occupations, Squatting, Direct Action and the Cuts, and Women and Direct Action. The con-

STUDENT COMPANIES CRASH NUS CRISIS DEMANDS SOCIALIST ANSWER



GRAHAM THRELFALL

The proposals to close the companies took ANDY DURGAN and GRAHAM THRELFALL, members of the National Organisation of IS Societies and the far left minority on the NUS Executive, completely by surprise. 'The decision was a fait accompli', said Graham Threlfall. 'Our attempts to get information before the meetings were blocked by Chris Morgan, the NUS Treasurer. I think they were worried that we would have informed staff unions and workers of the sackings.'

Andy Durgan was of the opinion that the decision would give a big boost to the right wing. 'By using the increased finances of the union to extend services rather than build campaigns, the Broad Left have dug their own grave', he said. 'The right will argue that the problem is socialist mismanagement, and as long as the Broad Left stress services they will



ANDY DURGAN

not have an answer.' But he also added that while the NUS will polarise as a result of the closures, the left will also grow in its determination to keep the NUS united around fighting political campaigns.

Graham Threlfall discussed how the left could be strengthened. 'Obviously we see NOISS as the alternative on the left. But there will be militants, perhaps at the base of the Broad Left, who while they won't relate immediately to NOISS will want to oppose the line of the Executive that has had such disastrous consequences. We have to be able to unite these forces to combat the right wing.'

'I am confident that there will be no conflict with delegates at our forthcoming national conference', declared Charles Clarke, National Union of Students president, last week. He was addressing himself to the most serious crisis in the history of the union — the liquidation of NUS Travel and other companies run by students. Clarke's apparent complacency reveals some of the political problems which lie at the root of the crisis.

The NUS has been plagued by a campaign by the maverick right-wing groups for the disaffiliation of colleges from the union. The framework of an alternative right-wing union — the British Students Association — has been set up by a City of London accountant, Leonardo Martini Brown, whose financial backing makes up for what it lacks in support from the colleges.

The Broad Left leadership on the executive has failed to counter this campaign politically and instead has extolled to the skies the virtues of the services offered by the NUS. The liquidation of the travel service means that the bottom has dropped out of this line of defence. Yet the first political action of the Broad Left after the announcements was to make a joint declaration with the Tories basing the fight for unity of the NUS on... the services that still remain!

The closures have meant the sacking of over 200 staff, a large number of them women unprotected by union organisation. The National Graphical Association, which organises all the 50 or so print workers, was not given any prior notice of the sackings according to Clarke. Not sacked, however, is Mike Naylor, £20,000 boss of the enterprise.

fact not revealed at the press conference. Despite assurances from Clarke that both membership subscriptions and the still healthy Endsleigh Insurance would be safeguarded from future losses as the result of a 'set-off' agreement, the NUS has already lost £73,000 from the assets of the union and Endsleigh to the banks.

The NUS Travel service was founded in 1922. But it was only when the left in the union began to press for a campaigning union in the mid-1960s that the NUS was wrenched away from its dubious association with the International Student Conference, a CIA-funded organisation.

BROAD LEFT

The most successful campaigns of the union were those conducted against Margaret Thatcher's proposals in 1971-72, which would have bound student unions to the state through the college authorities. But these campaigns were followed by a decision by the NUS leadership to develop the services side of the NUS, instead of ploughing all major resources into the promotion of political campaigns.

The wave of occupations against the unemployment of student teachers last summer took the NUS leadership by surprise, engaged as they were in the project of seeking alliances with the trade union bureaucracy — still committed body and soul to support of the Social Contract.

In this situation the growth of the right has been rapid. The Federation of Conservative Students won their first position on the Executive this year. This term their organisation has grown by 60 per cent.

The forthcoming conference of the NUS will find the Broad Left in alliance with main-stream student Tories. The Tories will be demanding political concessions from the Broad Left as the price of their 'stand' against disaffiliation, in particular that the service role of the NUS is emphasised at the expense of cam-



CHARLES CLARKE (2nd Left) at the press conference announcing the closures. Now the full facts of the crash must be laid before delegates at the next NUS Conference.

paings. But there will be no holding back the insistent demands of the base of the FCS for disaffiliations.

The compromise of the Broad Left with the Tories will aid developments towards a right-wing take over of the NUS, and even start to threaten the existence of a unified student movement.

The challenge to this bloc from the left of the union, including the base of the Broad Left, must be that political campaigns can unite the student movement. The ownership of private service companies, subject to the massive pressures of the economic crisis, serves to endanger the viability of such a union.

ACTION

The left has to be able to present a programme of action to meet that threat including:

- ★ The fight for unity of the NUS on the basis of a fighting campaign against the Labour Government's attacks on students, in alliance with all those workers fighting those policies.

- ★ For an immediate cash injection by the Labour Government to re-employ all the sacked workers and restore services on the basis of state finance.

- ★ The support of the labour movement must be won to such a project through a plan for the reorganisation of the travel services, drawn up in conjunction with the rail unions and the unions concerned with all other areas of travel, including the airlines and road services.

Given the precarious state of charter airline firms, a campaign for the nationalisation of all such companies must be at the centre of such a plan. At the same time the expertise of the sacked staff must be used to draw up the outline of such a plan.

- ★ The full facts of the closures must be made available to the conference. All information must be available to a commission elected directly from the floor of the conference.

- ★ The NUS should fight for the nationalisation of the other remaining companies by the Labour Government.

UNITE

The responsibility for the collapse of these firms does not lie with the workers who are thrown on the dole queue as a result. The responsibility lies with the anarchistic and unplanned nature of capitalist production. But the acceptance by the Broad Left leadership of the logic of this system and their refusal to wage a fight for the Labour Government to protect the workers' jobs through such

union, emphasised once again by their joint statement with the FCS.

The way in which a programme of action can be fought for at the next conference is to unite all those forces on the left of the union on the basis of a campaign against the policies of the Labour Government.

Any attempts by individuals or sections of the left to put themselves forward as the alternative will lead to a disaster and

OPEN LETTER TO LEFT IN NUS

With the liquidation of NUS Travel and other service companies, the basis has been laid for a massive growth of the right wing in the student movement.

The Broad Left leadership's strategy of using services as the main way of attracting and maintaining membership of the union is in ruins. Their failure to build a strong campaigning union, which would have meant an end to their reliance on the trade union leaders, has left the door open to the Federation of Conservative Students. The Tories have said that they expect big political concessions as the price of their support for the Broad Left in office.

To fight the right-wing offensive, the unity of the left is essential. For that reason we have decided to call a meeting of activists on Saturday 4 December at the London School of Economics, Room S101A, Houghton Street, London WC2, from 12.00 noon to 5.00 p.m. on the following basis:

- ★ Reject the Broad Left deal with the Tories. For a united left to challenge the right.

- ★ Defend jobs and services. Make the state responsible for re-hiring and re-establishing services.

- ★ The only way forward for the NUS is through building a political campaigning union, based on an alliance in action with the working class, to defend members' interests.

We think that the meeting should be as broad and democratic as possible. To this end a planning meeting, open to any individual or group, will be held on Saturday 27 November at 6.00 p.m. at the University of London Union, Malet Street, WC1.

Student Commission, International Marxist Group.

play into the hands of the right wing. NOISS Executive member Graham Threlfall's analysis that the forces that have to be organised are broader than those that can simply be won around the existing left groupings is absolutely right.

A new phase has opened up in student politics. It will be a test of the maturity and organising ability of the left opposition in the NUS which will be a decisive factor in the coming months.

PAUL BROOKE (IMG Student Organiser)

- ★ The Student Commission of the IMG urgently needs money to carry forward the fight for this programme in the student movement. The seriousness of this crisis in the NUS demands the widest distribution of pamphlets, leaflets and posters. All student militants should rush collections from students, donations, etc

PROTEST

The announcement comes three weeks before the national conference of the NUS. Left minority members of the Executive protested that the decision should be the right of conference delegates. The last report on services presented to the NUS conference proposed the sacking of three workers. This section was referred back.

The two left minority members of the Executive, members of the National Organisation of IS Societies, issued a counter-statement to that of the NUS Executive majority calling for the nationalisation of the companies.

Also contained in the statement was a



DEFEND OVERSEAS STUDENTS

Students at Teesside Polytechnic are in occupation against moves to deport overseas students who haven't paid all outstanding fees. A bugging device was discovered last weekend. Red Weekly spoke to an overseas student active in the occupation (whom we cannot name for obvious reasons) on how she saw the struggle developing.

She vigorously pointed out that in a situation where the campus unions are dissociating themselves from the occupation, and where white students don't fully understand the issues involved, the NUS Executive have been slow to meet their obligations in providing support. This has meant that the occupation is not seen as a focal point of opposition to the cuts as a whole, and has been unable to link up with similar protests e.g. that at Middlesex Polytechnic.

Explicitly racist documents have been found in the Poly administration offices which argue that overseas students alter the character of educational institutions. The students are calling a demonstration for Saturday 4 December and need the support of as many students as possible — 'It is central that we are not seen as a minority in the

It's the right one

The aim of the British Students Association founded by Leonardo Martini Brown is to provide a union more democratic and open than the 'Marxist-controlled' NUS.

So they base their constitution on ballots. According to a report in the NUS paper National Student, their constitution provides that any issue may be put to the ballot on 'a specific written request signed by one tenth of the membership, the cost of such a referendum to be met in advance by the applicants'. National Student points out that the cost of a National Union of Journalists ballot of its 28,000 members was over £15,000.

We don't know whether the BSA will be running a campaign for higher



IRELAND NE

The words 'Ireland Unfree Shall Never Be At Peace' first written over 60 years ago by an Irish Republican, then Ireland has been partitioned through the guns of the British Army; there have been pogroms against nationalists in the artificial statelet of the North of Ireland; there has been mass unemployment. In the last eight years the British Army has engaged in indiscriminate murder, tortured hundreds of its opponents, and rounded up thousands for imprisonment without trial.

But the self-proclaimed 'Peace People' of the North of Ireland support that Army, and have called on all to follow them to do likewise. They have said they are in favour of creating employment and improving housing.

Women and Ireland

★ Since the creation of the 'Irish Republic' there has been a total ban on abortion, divorce and, until 18 months ago, contraception in the 26 Counties.

★ In 1974 2,000 Irish women travelled to this country to obtain abortions.

★ In 1975 there were only six day nurseries in Dublin, a city of close on one million people.

★ Women represent one third of the working population and receive 50 per cent of male wages.

★ In the North the 1967 Abortion Act does not apply.

★ The same goes for the 1969 Divorce Reform Act.

★ There are only 30 state nurseries for the whole of the Six Counties — none of which remain open all day.

These facts alone indicate that women in Ireland are among the most oppressed in the most advanced capitalist countries. Both at the level of sexual freedom and in living and working conditions, there is a stark contrast between the intensity of women's oppression in Ireland and the gains won in Britain.

The roots of this contrast lie not only in the strength of the Catholic Church — which has a history of continual support for British imperialism in Ireland — but in the equally long history of economic exploitation in Ireland by that imperialism. This means that women are forced into a position of deep exploitation in a country which has the lowest income per head in Europe.

CRISIS

In southern Ireland, no formal 'independence' can disguise the continued domination by Britain. The state is locked in a permanent economic crisis which makes it necessary to maximise and maintain the strength of the family. Thus the Church becomes a very powerful weapon.

In 1939 an Act passed by the Irish Parliament gave the Catholic Church 'special status', allowing it to maintain control of virtually all spheres of working class life — from determining the books people read to saying what is a 'just' strike.

The Church's influence on women appears most clearly in the stranglehold which the family has on Irish society and the very severe restraints on personal and sexual

freedom which Irish women suffer.

That the direct cause is domination by imperialism can be seen from the scope of the Church's influence. It is not limited to the South but extends to the Orange state, where the rate of exploitation by Britain is only minimally contrasted. The Catholic Church — for all the supposed Protestantism of the Orange leaders — has been permitted to maintain its own schools and sphere of influence.

The Protestant churches are given the same, indeed greater, rights. Both play their part in maintaining the sectarian divide. Thus both play their part in maintaining the British presence.

It is because of that presence, and because of the depth of anti-imperialist sentiment in the Irish working class, that large numbers of the most advanced women militants choose to become active in the Republican movement rather than the women's liberation movement.

DEFENCE

These women see the Republican movement as the only means through which they can wage the struggle against British domination, the only means of defence against British troops. For these women this is the first priority — which is why the working class women of Turf Lodge responded with such venom against the 'Peace People', whom they saw as supporters of Britain and its troops.

The involvement of hundreds of women in the Republican movement — there are over 200 women political prisoners — and the acknowledged leadership positions which women hold in the Republican movement are an indication of their determination and their role. Their stand identifies for women that a central source of their oppression is the continuance of imperialism.

It is a stand those in the women's movement in this country should acknowledge and support, because while women in this country can assist the development of a women's movement in Ireland, we have a greater contribution to make. That contribution consists of throwing our weight behind immediate British withdrawal from Ireland and building solidarity actions demanding the release of all women political prisoners in the North and South.

MARIA O'BRIEN



The Rise and Fall of the Peace People

No matter how many thousands the self-proclaimed 'Peace People' rally at Trafalgar Square, in the North of Ireland (which is where it matters) the movement is in a state of rapid decline. While right-wing Loyalists continue to support it, the attitude of thousands in the Catholic ghettos is now one of outright hostility.

The reason is that the 'Peace People' have stated their support for the British Army — the largest armed body of men in Ireland. When you tell working class Catholics to support a 'peace-keeping' force which has systematically murdered hundreds of people, tortured thousands, interned without trial thousands, and raided the homes of tens of thousands, then the only response you can expect is contempt. The facts tell their own story:

11 August: British soldiers in Belfast shoot at a car driven by a member of the Provisional Republican movement. The soldier's bullet kills the driver and the car runs onto the pavement where it crashes into a mother and her three children. The children are killed.

13 August: Betty Williams protests against the deaths of the children and blames the Provisionals. She is given front page treatment by the *Daily Express* under the headline 'Why I Must Stop the IRA'.

14 August: First 'peace' march in Belfast. 8,000 attend.

21 August: Second 'peace' march, 20,000 attend. The *Irish Times* reports that the majority are from 'hard line Protestant areas of East Belfast'.

22 August: Mairead Corrigan, another leader of the 'Peace People', tells the *Observer*: 'In a month's time there's not going to be a bombing or a hijack or a shooting'. The month of September which follows sees the highest level of violence in any one month for four years.

29 August: Further march in the Loyalist Shankill area of Belfast. The march is given protection by the Ulster Defence Association. The Ulster Volunteer Force, who with the UDA have been responsible for the vast majority of indiscriminate assassinations of Catholics, say that they are 'not antagonistic to Saturday's walk'. They also declare that they themselves have 'consistently worked for peace'.

14 September: Brian Faulkner, who introduced internment without trial in 1971 and was premier at the time of 'Bloody Sunday', says that he gives 'full support' to the 'Peace People'. He says they have 'given people like me great assistance'.

18 September: 'Peace' march in Liverpool. The *Irish Times* reports that 'police were asked by one of the organisers to move away several men and women distributing "Troops Out" leaflets'.

25 September: 'Peace' march in Glasgow receives official support from the Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland.

11 October: 'Peace People' leaders chased from a meeting in the Turf Lodge area of Belfast. Because of their refusal to comment on the role of the British Army, they are accused of sharing responsibility for the death of 13-year-old Paul Stewart, killed by a plastic bullet of the Army.

12 October: Following this attack, 'Peace People' leaders make first critical comments on the Army. Reacting to this, a prominent Protestant minister declares that this criticism 'can do' nothing but alienate even the most moderate Loyalist.

13 October: Peace leaders say their statement on the Army was an 'over-reaction'. They make a second and this time 'definitive' statement: 'Our attitude to the security forces is: we fully support the rule of law, and until the Northern Ireland community themselves evolve their own constitutions and form of government, then the Royal Ulster Constabulary and other forces are the only legitim-

TROOPS OUT TROOPS OUT

D UNFREE SHALL VER BE AT PEACE

conditions. They say they are in favour of 'peace'.

The Ulster Volunteer Force, in supporting the 'Peace People', have stated that they are also in favour of peace. Lyndon Johnson said he was in favour of peace in Vietnam. Ian Smith wants peace in Rhodesia.

Peace is a very popular commodity. The problem is what kind of peace, and how is it to be achieved. The leaders of the 'Peace People' either see peace as coming through the 'peace-keeping' force of the British Army, or are silent. They sing hymns, they pray.

But peace, as with houses and jobs, does not come through hymns and prayers. Peace comes by offering and supporting policies which are aimed at achieving a peace

which is lasting and which therefore is just.

As far as Ireland is concerned this means removing the cause of the cancer; in two words, British imperialism. It is that imperialism which has divided the working class of Ireland, which is responsible for the appalling social and economic conditions in Ireland, whose troops today are the major obstacle to a just and lasting peace.

That is why all readers of **Red Weekly** are asked to join the 'Peace Through Freedom' picket at Speakers Corner this Saturday, starting at 11.30am. Then, in opposition to the pro-repression policies of the fake peace-peddlers, the way to peace in Ireland will be stated loud and clear: self-determination for the Irish people, troops out now!



olders of law and order'. In the words of the error: 'Ulster Peace Brigade Backs Army'. October: Visor, a British Army journal, states Catholic working class area of Ballymurphy: my is viewed with unconcealed hostility as of occupation... the hostility was unremitt- th never a sign that the peace movement ain a foothold there.'

October: Mrs Ewart-Biggs, wife of the assass- British ambassador in Ireland, joins the 'Peace People'. She says she is going to 'carry on band's work.'

October: Rival marches in the Falls area of . After prediction from a 'Peace People' that they would 'swamp' the 'Peace With' rally, the two demonstrations are roughly Many of the 'Peace People' are from Loyalist

October: Ivan Cooper, member of the reformist Democratic and Labour Party, criticises the 'Peace People' as 'part of a British government racy'.

October: British Government announces its n to lift a four-year ban on Irish demonst- Trafalgar Square. The **Daily Telegraph** nts that this 'demonstrates the encourage- Ministers wish to give to the peace move-

October: Biggest demonstration seen in since the 'Peace People' began. The on is the funeral of Maire Drumm, assassin- ader of the Provisional Sinn Fein. The **Daily** estimates the attendance as 30,000.

November: Paddy Devlin, another leader of the speaks of the fall of support for the 'Peace', and accuses its leadership of 'receiving arms of money under false pretences.'

November: 'Peace' rally in Belfast attracts st attendance so far.

November: On the eve of a 'Peace People' pop , only 100 out of 1,500 tickets have been he concert is cancelled.

What their opponents say

Gery Adams

Provisional leader now held in Long Kesh

'The leadership of the present peace campaign tell us that they are dedicated to building a peaceful society. No amount of pray-ins or liberalism can give us this. The system which the Irish live under is not built for peace, and it is this which will defeat the desire which is being demon- strated at present.

'Ballymurphy, my home area, has always wanted peace. Violence existed there long before the IRA became active. Six hundred families exist in the area. The area is without any provision of facilities for young people, for the aged, for mothers or for schoolchildren. One hundred of the families have more than ten people in them, each family cramped into ill-repaired, misplanned, jerrybuilt houses. 47 per cent of the residents are refused employ- ment.

'Is this an example of the society in which we are supposed to believe — a just and peaceful society? All of the eighty community groups yearn for peace daily. Their demand for peace came before 1969. Their peace demands were for employ- ment, for better housing, play centres, facilities for the aged, the handicapped and the young. They desired freedom from heavy rents; freedom from the dole queues and freedom from the Assistance Office.

They have made these peace demands to the establishment for the last twenty years!

'These demands have been consistently refused because they cannot and could not be conceded by Stormont's political regime. In the same way, the peace demands of the peace people will also be rejected, because their demands cannot be con- ceded by such regimes. A peaceful and just society cannot be built in Ireland by peace marches in the same way as it could not be built in Ballymurphy by demands to Corporation officials or Government offi- ces.

'Republicans believe that ordinary Prot- estants will face up to the reality of the situation when the British prop and the system which uses them as its tools is removed. Those presently professing a pro-British loyalty will realise that their welfare will be better served in a system in which all Irishmen, regardless of religion, can work together. That system cannot evolve within the present set-up. Peace will only come when sectarianism and the British presence which maintains it are removed.'

Taken from a pamphlet recently pub- lished by the Belfast Republican Press Centre.

Pat Arrowsmith

'If the word "peace" has any meaning [and for me, a pacifist, it certainly has] then surely those who call themselves Peace People shouldn't approve of armies of occupation.

'Real peacemakers are political people — that is, they examine the underlying causes of the conflict they are concerned about, then act accordingly. Centuries of British policy towards Ireland is the reason why the two communities in the artificial Northern Ireland statelet have paramilitary forces. Until Britain withdraws from Ireland and removes her troops there can never be peace.

'When Harry Courcha of Edmonton Lab- our Party and I [as sponsors of the Labour Movement Delegation to Ireland] recently talked to Mairead Corrigan in the Peace People's office we asked her a number of direct questions to which we received fluffy, inconsistent answers. As Peace People, we asked, did they believe British troops should be withdrawn from Northern Ireland? Her first answer to this was that it would take them a year to evolve a policy on such a matter. She gave the same reply when asked their position on partition, a United Ireland, etc.

'Later in the same conversation, how- ever, she said that their main aim was to "achieve a harmonious Northern state". The British Army, she said, "can stay in the background and let the communities come together." It would be "premature" in her opinion, to withdraw British troops now. Almost in the same breath, she said that peace meant condemning all violence!

'As far as I am concerned, that is no policy at all and will never bring peace to Ireland.'

Bernadette Devlin

'The first prerequisite for achieving peace in Ireland is the withdrawal of Britain from Irish affairs — in practical terms, the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland.

'Many people who have followed the peace women have done so out of a genuine and sincere desire to see an end to the sectarian assassinations, an end to the complete upheaval of their social and family lives. But they are being led along a garden path to ultimately accepting what- ever Britain has to offer — peacefully.

'Many people see the peace movement as a women's movement and therefore progressive. But the peace movement is the greatest indication of the failure to politicise women in Ireland. The question of women's liberation is part of the socialist struggle for equality.'

Student Conference Backs Counter-demo

The Student Movement Conference on Ireland at Canterbury on 13-14 November adopted a plan of action on the basis of 'Britain Out of Ireland — Self-Determination for the Irish People — Troops Out Now'.

After a total of eleven hours of debate on the major aspects of the situation in Ireland and the responsibilities which have to be faced by British students, a campaign was launched which began modestly enough [but importantly] with a telegram to the British Government demanding the removal of the threat to the lives of Noel and Marie Murray, and will move on through mobil- isations against the 'Peace People' to a Week of Action in January. A broadly- based co-ordinating committee was set up to oversee the development of the cam- paign.

MOOD

Despite the endorsements and commit- ments given by sections of the reformist left in the NUS, including the presence of members of the Official Republican Move- ment and individuals from the base of the Broad Left at the conference, the mood from the beginning was for 'Troops Out Now'.

Many of the 100 or more students

attending had been won to that position through the debates which had taken place in the colleges in the speaking tour to build the conference. Nevertheless, the absence of any organised presence from the Broad Left — even the speaker from the NUS dele- gation to Northern Ireland and the promised observer from the Executive failed to turn up — changed entirely the nature of the debate which had been, perhaps over- optimistically, expected.

However, the organisations of the rev- olutionary left comprised only 20-30 per cent of the students present, and this allowed a discussion of a unique character to take place for the supporters of the demands which the conference finally adopted. Instead of a bear-garden in which the different groups battled with each other to foist their 'line' on the conference, there was a sober and constructive discussion which drew a balance-sheet of previous activity in the NUS, assessed the present situation, and from there drew conclusions on how to take the campaign forward.

Amongst these one of the most important was the identification of the possibilities of winning layers of women to an anti- imperialist stand — already shown the previous weekend when the NUS Women's Conference rejected the Broad Left's posi-

tion on the 'Peace People' and instead voted to support the Canterbury confer- ence.

The conference drew the conclusion that because Britain's domination of Ireland structures the oppression of Irish women and gays, the struggle for their liberation is an integral rather than peripheral part of the fight against British rule. Translating those conclusions into practice, the confer- ence called for a women's contingent on the 27 November 'Peace Through Freedom' counter-demonstration, and for the co-ord- inating committee to build for it in the NUS.

The balance-sheet of the conference then is an overwhelmingly positive one. As the speaker summing up on the composite resolution from the Middlesex Polytechnic students and IMG students [the motion finally adopted] put it: 'It allows the activists to go from here armed with a plan of action, confident that they can open up a new stage of activity on the Irish question in the NUS which can be a major step forward in the eventual building of a solidarity movement of hundreds of thousands of British people in the streets.'

That stage has not arrived yet, but it was brought much closer by the Canterbury student conference.

AILEAN O'CALLAGHAN



WHO THEY ARE

The latest recruit to the 'Peace People' is JOYCE KELLY, who is a leader of the Derry movement. Joyce Kelly has an interesting history. In 1972 she and the rest of her family squatted in a house in the Waterside district of Derry. During her stay she turned the house into a meeting place for the Ulster Defence Association and constantly flew the Vanguard flag from the bedroom window. At the time the area was 70 per cent Catho- lic.

In September 1973 Ms Kelly moved out of the area to squat in another house. At a British Legion Social Club she declared that she 'was getting out so that the Fenian scum could be cleaned out'.

CIARAN MCKEOWN is editor of a 'moderate' pro-Unionist [i.e. pro-Brit- ish] magazine in the North of Ireland called Fortnight. He is a seasoned politico, having been president of the

Student Union of Ireland, a member of the 26 county Fianna Fail party of Jack Lynch, and also briefly of People's Democracy.

BETTY WILLIAMS likes to describe herself as a housewife. Last week her life story was serialised by the **Daily Express**. She lives in a middle class area of Belfast and was — indeed, still may be — a member of the Alliance Party. The Alliance Party is a pro- border, pro-British party, composed almost entirely of middle and upper class members, which supported the introduction of Internment.

MAIREAD CORRIGAN is secretary to the managing director of Guinness in Northern Ireland. Guinness have a long anti-trade union history in Ire- land. Ms Corrigan is now on paid leave. She also gets paid by the 'Peace People'. In the past she has worked with the Legion of Mary, a fanatically puritanical organisation of the Cath- olic Church.

TROOPS OUT... TROOPS OUT...

class struggle candidate?

The interview and comment on the Angell Ward by-election in Lambeth [Red Weekly, 18 November] unfortunately failed to answer the crucial questions on the fight for class struggle candidates in bourgeois elections. It is a pity that a number of remarks by Marie Montaut, the Labour candidate, were allowed to pass without comment.

In particular, Montaut's attack on the candidature of a member of the International Socialists is unwarranted sectarianism, reflected in the introduction to the interview. Is it really the case that the revolutionary left should not stand candidates 'whether the Labour candidate is right or left'? Montaut is very free with accusations of 'political treachery' when it comes to IS, without once mentioning the genuine political treachery of the Labour Party leadership which is behind the cuts and the preservation of the racist Immigration Act.

Of course, IS should be criticised for their sectarian failure to fight for a class struggle candidate within the mass organisations of the working class, including the Labour Party. But nowhere is it made clear what fight the IMG waged for a candidate on a class struggle programme who would be accountable to those mass organisations.

Is Marie Montaut such a class struggle candidate? It would seem not. Her election address is formulated by the Labour Party. She is clearly not accountable to the working class of Lambeth — she talks about her political stand on the Council being 'reflected through to people in the area'. Any populist could stand on that basis.

Finally, Montaut's adoption as candidate seems to signal the end of her 'record of struggle' — the Labour Party refused her permission to speak at the 10 November mass picket of a National Front meeting (unlike the two far left candidates), and on the platform of the All Lambeth Anti-Racist Movement the previous Saturday.

Following Red Weekly's correct analysis around the Walsall and Newcastle by-elections it is important that it is spelt out why a Labour candidate is now being supported against the IS. Have new criteria been established for a class struggle candidate, or has there perhaps been an error of judgement? In either case Red Weekly should make its position clear. — CHRIS O'BRIEN (South London)



The result of the Angell ward by-election was as follows: Marie Montaut [Labour] 701, Gerald Hartup [Conservative] 481, Kathleen Mott [National Front] 224, John Sandland [National Party] 165, Europe Singh [Socialist Worker] 34, Alan Whereat [Anti-National Front and Anti-Labour party] 28, Evan Sparks [United Anti-Fascist] 17. The turnout was 20.8 per cent.

Some questions for I.S.

Bill Collins, secretary of the International Socialists in Durham, points out (Red Weekly, 18 November) that IMG members are not in a position to prevent the IS going forward to build the Socialist Workers Party. But we are entitled to raise some questions on this project. While it is true that the IS is much larger than the other far left organisations in Britain, we would question whether it has the ability to fulfill the tasks outlined in the latest issue of its journal *International Socialism*: 'In the short term we have to replace the Communist Party and mount a serious challenge to the trade union bureaucracy (which involves a long hard struggle to displace the "broad lefts" as the opposition'.

More modestly, the journal goes on: 'We are not, and will not be in the immediately foreseeable future an effective alternative to the Labour Party.' So how will they be able to mount this challenge? To some extent we have to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps, but we do it in a

situation in which numbers of workers are turning away from Labour.'

This bootstrap method is spelled out in *International Socialism* in relation to elections. The IS see the need to stand in by-elections. However this is not serious unless they also stand 50-60 candidates in the General Election. Only a party does this sort of thing. Therefore the IS is a party. QED.

It is not the immodesty of these statements that should concern us but the fact that — as Geoff Ryan pointed out last week — they are merely the expression of an ultra-left attitude towards the mass organisations.

I wish Bill Collins every success in his fight to change the IS regime; but the record of expulsions from that organisation does not give me much confidence. Nor does the fact that comrade Collins' fight is not reflected in the correspondence columns of *Socialist Worker*. — RAY BURNS [Lambeth]

Expose reformism from inside!

As a Labour Party member who supports Red Weekly, I find your views regarding the recent by-elections rather confusing.

Red Weekly's opinion of the IS, and rightly so, is that 'they think it is possible to jump over the stage of winning the base of the trade unions and Labour Party' (4 November). The same article goes on to say that we must confront the reformist leadership of the working class, but that this tactic can only succeed by proving 'in practice' the bankruptcy of their traditional leaders. It is also pointed out that there is 'a real need and opportunity to build a left wing

in the unions and Labour Party'.

Fine! But how is it proposed that Marxists in the Labour Party should work towards this and vote for Independents at the same time?

There is a tremendous militancy burgeoning forth in the Constituency Labour Parties, and the rank-and-file are becoming increasingly angry at the betrayals of the Labour Government. But surely the right tactic at the present stage of the class struggle is to expose the bankruptcy of reformism from within.

At the present time I cannot help feeling that to advise a vote against Labour, however right-wing the candidate, is a diversion from the immediate class struggle. It is a misunderstanding of the practical possibilities to propose voting against Labour unless the candidate fulfills certain left-wing demands.

I believe that the practically correct position is to vote Labour and then expose the right wing within the party. By so doing an extremely militant wing can develop within the Labour party, which will eventually refuse to accept the betrayals of the reformist leadership. The tasks of Marxists within the Labour Party is to expose the right wing in front of the rank-and-file, through practical experience.

Surely it is a gross contradiction to recognise the need to win the base of the Labour Party and simultaneously advise voting against particular Labour candidates?

On another issue, I would like to agree with the comrades who raised the question of sexual politics (4 November). Perhaps Red Weekly could elucidate some of the tasks of the 'sexual revolution'. A lead is required to open up discussion on this fundamentally important area.

Lastly, I think that the transition from the old to the new Red Weekly is being carried out highly successfully. The lay-out of the paper is very attractive and a fine balance has been accomplished. Congratulations for achieving such a high standard. — CHRIS WOOD [Brent East CLP and Young Socialists]

'Mugging' v Black Power

I hope you will print the following letter as a contribution to a possible debate on the problems of black youth and in particular the article by Tunde Anthony in Red Weekly of 4 November.

The technical and sometimes actual 'assault' and theft of money from middle aged and elderly women by young blacks is sexist, racist and exploitative in the worst traditions of capitalism. There can be no socialist or alternative justification for these attacks. Those who seek to apologise for these actions do no service to the real problems of black youth.

It would be well to remember the teaching of MALCOLM X and the lyrics of the 'Last Poets'. The real tragedy is that instead of following Malcolm's example and concepts of Black Power, many black youth have been criminally misled by 'so-called' Black Power advocates whose rhetoric was and still is a mask for their own personal decadent honky [white] man's materialistic, racist and sexist values and actions.

To Malcolm and other Black Power brothers and sisters, Black Power was a means for black people to regain their self-respect and control over their miserable conditions under capitalism [black as well as white]. To attack and rob fellow victims of capitalism, weaker and sometimes poorer than oneself, and to use such financial gains not to attack capitalism, but to escape from it, or to prop it up further by spending this money on the trappings of the sick white man's world, is the very antithesis of Black Power or any radical alternative to capitalism. It also shows a cynical lack of respect for the death and memory of Malcolm X and other Black Power militants still alive but imprisoned throughout the world.

It is a moral issue. If it is wrong for capitalists to exploit us, it is wrong for young blacks and anyone else to exploit old defenceless women. Far better for them to concentrate their energies on the real enemy — and the dole money is still sufficient for that battle. — IAN KING (Margate).

Tunde Anthony's article stated that this form of activity by black youth was anti-social. But to put capitalist exploitation on the same level as hand-bag snatching, however violent, is precisely to fall into moralism — not revolutionary moralism, but bourgeois moralism.

This moralism expresses itself again in Ian King's statement that such activity represents a cynical lack of respect for the memory of Malcolm X, and other Black Power leaders. How many black youth have even heard of Malcolm X, let alone seen fit to spit on his grave?

This is the real problem — to fight for a class understanding of racial oppression. Ian King's position can only mystify that understanding by equating the violence of the oppressors with the violence of the oppressed, however misdirected against weaker members of the working class.

LETTERS



Any more Questions?

The report in Red Weekly (18 November) of the 'disruption' of the Powell/Hart 'Any Questions' programme was grossly inadequate.

The 'working class members of the audience' were not only 'insisting on their right to put question and not submit to the BBC's vetting procedure' (if they were doing this — I have no evidence of this), they were chanting the **apolitical and moralistic** slogan 'Enoch Powell is a murderer'.

Worse still, one of the '70 militants' outside threw 'a brick' (according to one informant who highly approved) or 'a stone' (according to the BBC news) through the window. This was what really caused the programme to be suspended, not 'stopped'.

Did it deny a platform to racists? No! Both Powell and Hart (who is a social

media next day.

It is an important fact that those anti-racists in Bristol who believe that these tactics are a proper way to build an anti-racist movement and deny a platform to racists and fascists did not turn out to counter-demonstrate when Betty Williams led her 'peace' procession through Bristol on the following Saturday. Throwing stones through windows is much more exciting and (dare I say it) requires much less courage than opposing politically a reactionary mass movement which has some support from substantial numbers of the working class.

These tactics are of a piece with the 'military discipline' of the Right to Work March leaders. They are the wrong way to put the Harts on the spot and deny a platform to the Powells, and Red Weekly

SOUTHERN GOVERNMENT ON TRIAL

Some points need to be made on Geoff Bell's article 'Southern Government Politics on Trial' (Red Weekly, 28 October).

1. While events over the last few weeks have clearly thrown light on the vulnerability of the coalition Government, it can hardly be suggested that its stability has been weakened by these events. That the coalition has suffered a setback, considering the nature of the legislation recently inflicted on the Southern working class, is not surprising; but to interpret that setback as a 'political crisis' underlining the failure of the Southern Government to isolate off the Six Counties' is, to say the least, an inaccurate and misleading evaluation.

The balance sheet of the coalition's efforts to criminalise and isolate the Republican movement from the masses in the South is a positive one; and in spite of the build-up of the repressive state apparatus, and unprecedented collaboration with Britain, it has strengthened its position since 1973 to the extent of winning several seats from Fianna Fail in rural areas.

At the time of writing there has as yet been no open challenge to the Government on the national question, either from within the labour movement or from the massive rural Republican base in the south. It is for this reason that it is far too early to predict whether or not this current crisis will extend beyond the closed doors of the Irish Parliament.

The President's resignation — after he signed the go-ahead for the Bill — is significant only in that it may well provide the stimulus for a fight-back from the workers movement and the rural masses, expressing the subdued ferment on repressive legislation, cross border

there is as yet no indication that such a crisis will emerge, if it does it is likely to express itself in a return of Fianna Fail to Government in 1978 or possibly earlier.

2. The article failed to differentiate between parties whose votes are based on pro- and anti-Republicanism, and failed to note the repercussions which a swing in government of that nature could vent on imperialism in the coming period.

While pointing out Fianna Fail's total inability to carry out its so-called Republican policies, the article failed to note that Jack Lynch's 'fence-sitting' from 1969-73 was a direct result of pressure from the party's Republican base; and that Fianna Fail would be in a far less favourable position to continue the current attack on the Republican movement, and would have considerable difficulty buying off their votes on the question of tête-a-têtes with the British Army.

To have a Fianna Fail government would seriously hamper Britain's project of destroying Republicanism as a serious political force in the short term, and could provide an opening for a change in the balance of forces in favour of the minority.

Finally, if the events of the last few weeks underline anything for us in Britain, it is that the impact of developments in the South on the struggle of the minority in the North is crucial, and that we need to extend our agitation and propaganda to encompass an understanding of this. Most importantly, these events point to the fact that active resistance to the tightening security network and repressive legislation in Ireland and Britain can play a major role in sharpening the class struggle in Ireland.

AVENGING THE PAST

JOHN BERGER is probably the most articulate and influential British Marxist art critic and novelist. He is best known for his TV series *Ways of Seeing*, his novel *G*, and his book on immigrant labour in Europe, *A Seventh Man*.

He now lives in France but was recently in London in connection with the opening of a theatrical version of *A Seventh Man* which we reviewed last week. **CARL GARDNER** first asked him what he saw as the purpose of 'left theatre'.

There are two aspects to this. Take a group like Red Ladder, for example, who make performances a prelude to discussion. They are very clear in their minds exactly and precisely whom they are addressing. Hence there is the possibility of a discussion because a discussion depends on certain things — shared experience or even immediate shared objectives — held in common.

In this situation we are talking about a working class theatre group and their insertion into the labour movement in a very precise way. That is one thing — that kind of performance, however creative and inventive, is nevertheless not complete in itself, but exists as a prelude to discussion.

A play as a thing in itself is a different matter. If it has any justification at all, it has to operate in a different way and there will be a much greater ambiguity about whom it is addressing.

What then happens? If it is about an important issue or a significant experience which is relatively complete in itself then how does it work?

It seems to me that what it has to do is to present that experience in such a way that each individual member of the audience is able to absorb that experience as his or her own, so it then becomes surrounded as it were inside with his or her own experience.

At one level that sounds a rather small, minimal result; but perhaps that's not quite true, because if that experience enters him/her sufficiently, that's going to become part of the material by which that person begins to judge his or her own life and come to decisions about it. If the play pre-empts that possibility of choosing, then it won't enter.

It can only enter in so far as it has a certain ambiguity about it, because what it has to do is to get alongside the experiences already in that person, and one cannot generalise about those experiences — they are all different. Hence the positive function of the ambiguity.

■ One of the criticisms I would have of the play *A Seventh Man* is that it is more of a liberal lament for immigrant workers

than such a part of a process of social change.

I would say several things about that. First, there isn't any overall solution to the problem of immigrant workers without the solution to many others, so one cannot end on a positive or programmatic note.

However if it sounds like a lament, which has within it a kind of cosy melancholy, then that is very bad. Of course, lamenting is part of the human condition and I don't think one can ever make the need for lament disappear. But

there is the question of the tone of the lament, and as I say — if it's a cosy melancholy, that's very bad.

Thirdly, if part of the revolution is avenging or, as Walter Benjamin put it, redeeming the past, then maybe one of the first things one has to actually do is to lament that past, to be really aware of what the past implies in terms of totally unnecessary, brutal suffering. One can only look at that and actually see it in terms of a lament — a dirge, if you like.

It seems to me now that a tragic vision is in no way contradictory to a revolutionary one. I think the mistake is to believe that a tragic vision pre-empts action. It is actually one of the most powerful stimulants of action.

■ You've commented recently that a particularly British form of fascism could be on the agenda. Could you elaborate on that?

I'm reluctant to elaborate because to substantiate that as an argument requires a detailed analysis of which I'm not really capable; but what are the pre-conditions for a possible fascism in general?

One is surely a very unstable economic situation, with a very high rate of inflation, because that high rate of inflation finally leads to working class action which is incompatible with parliamentary democracy. That would be one precondition and that would seem to be increasingly the case here.

The second precondition is that a significant section of the working class are so confused and disoriented by the political situation that they are capable of racist tendencies. It is then under cover of this racism that they can identify them-

self with certain sections of the ruling class and make a common front with them. There are increasing signs that this is actually happening.

But if I talk about fascism in Britain, I would emphasise that I think the danger is of a very British variety. I don't think the real danger is represented by the small fascist parties.

■ Going back to your interests as a writer, have they now moved away from the questions of art and culture?

I do write about art now far less than I used to. My interest in art was always because it seemed to me that works of art were unique and therefore extremely valuable ways of understanding something other than themselves.

It is not to say that I think that art is mere information, or that art can be mechanically explained in terms of what it is saying. In actual fact my attitude is not far from that of any serious artist, because artists are actually concerned with experience and art is a way of making sense of that experience.

If we are studying art, it is a way of studying experience which is so valuable precisely because it is articulated in a way that in living, except in very rare circumstances, it cannot be articulated. Those rare moments are moments of personal crisis or sometimes moments of historical crisis. And in that broader sense I am still interested in art.

■ One of the important points you make in *Ways of Seeing* about the importance of art and culture is that the working class has got to recapture its history in the form of art, which is the direct result of its surplus-labour and which the bourgeoisie has appropriated. It's only by re-assimilating our indirect history, in the form of culture, that we can adequately understand our present, and therefore plan to make changes in the future.

This seemed to me to put revolutionaries in the picture about why we must understand what art represented. Do you still hold to that?

Yes, I still hold to that. Amongst other things art is evidence about the past and now, in the present stage of corporate capitalism and imperialism, the ruling classes are terrified of the past — because a pincer movement between the past and the positive, alternative future is how they will finally be caught.

A starting point for this raising of consciousness is actually to point out how the past is denied by our society. Yes, that is to say that our society is under the hegemony of the ruling class.

Actually every worker in a sense knows this in a very personal way, through what happened to their parents and their family, and even what happens now. They have a sense of being excluded from history, but in a sense it is more far reaching than that.

What replaces the past is nostalgia, and this is particularly pronounced in Britain. It is part of the disintegration and crisis we are talking about. Nostalgia is the past made into a commodity and then consumed.

This denial of the past finds its most direct expression in the ideology of consumerism, because the past is shit, and if you take consumerism in its literal sense, that's what it becomes.

The miracle of art is that it is an embodiment of aspects of the past, which is there for us to see not as 'art', but as actually part of what you might call our heritage — but not in the sense of national cultural heritage, but in the sense of our historic heritage.



Red Ladder Theatre Group - they make their performances a prelude to discussion.

PROTESTS AT EXPULSION OF EAST GERMAN POET

POET and songwriter Wolf Biermann was banned from re-entering the German Democratic Republic last week while on a concert tour of West Germany.

Biermann moved to the GDR from Hamburg in 1953 because he argued that the workers state, despite its deformations, was a superior form of social system. He has consistently refused to move to the West and only accepted the invitation for this tour, from the metal workers union, because he had a re-entry permit. Many leading GDR artists have already called for Biermann's readmission.

Biermann is not a Trotskyist, but he has been a consistent left-wing critic of the GDR bureaucracy and advocate of workers democracy. His songs and poems also take up solidarity with other sections of the world revolution as well as dealing with other questions such as the oppression of women in the GDR.

Some years ago he commented: 'I can only love what I am also free to leave'. Now he does not even have that choice.

Below we print a translation by us of one of Biermann's poems, 'Eight Arguments for keeping the Name, "Stalin Avenue" for the Stalin Avenue'.



There is a street in Berlin
And one in Leningrad too
As well as in many
Other great cities
And it's not for nothing that it's called STALIN AVENUE
But heavens, mate, don't you understand
That what is past is past!

And the 17 June 53
When, armed only with bottles,
The workers answered back
It wasn't only beer which flowed
Oh yes, that too is why it's called STALIN AVENUE
But heavens, mate, don't you understand
That what is past is past!

And it's also because
On the stroke of half past nine in the evening
A deathly silence hangs there,
Beneath the lines of trees,
That it's called STALIN AVENUE, this street
But heavens, mate, don't you understand
That what is past is past!

After the great Party congress
More than one person put on his coat
And quietly
Went out to knock down a statue
Oh yes, that too is why it's called STALIN AVENUE
But heavens, mate, don't you understand
That what is past is past!

The stone plaques
Fell on our head
But the houses
Are there forever
[forever being rebuilt!!]
And that too is why this thing's called STALIN AVENUE

But heavens, mate, don't you understand
That what is past is past!

And Karl Marx, the great thinker
What did he do to deserve
His worthy name
On these stone plaques?
But damn it, this thing isn't called KARL MARX AVENUE
Understand, mate:
STALIN AVENUE!

We want to build socialism
The most beautiful streets
Where people live happily
Trusting their neighbour

And we will build ourselves a KARL MARX AVENUE!
And we will build ourselves an ENGELS AVENUE!
And we will build ourselves a BEBEL AVENUE!
And we will build ourselves a LIEBKNECHT AVENUE!
And we will build ourselves a LUXEMBURG AVENUE!
And we will build ourselves a LENIN AVENUE!
And we will build ourselves a TROTSKY AVENUE!
And we will build ourselves a THAELMANN AVENUE!
And we will build ourselves a BIERMANN Street!

[well, a little street, which won't cost much
at least a little alleyway, eh!]
But heavens, mate, don't you understand
That what is past is past!
That the old days are over!
That the old days are
In the past...

19 MONTHS OF CIVIL WAR IN LEBANON



13 APRIL 1975 Phalangist militia ambush Palestinian bus killing 27 Palestinians and triggering civil war.

16 May Lebanese Government resigns.

23-25 May Military government formed. Spontaneous mass demonstrations break out. Lebanese left takes initiative. Government falls.

SEPTEMBER 1975 Sinai Accords between Israel and Egypt, negotiated by Kissinger, remove the military threat of Egypt to the Zionist state. Syrian settlement prospects threatened, opening up Egyptian/Syrian rift.

SEPTEMBER 1975 - JANUARY 1976 End of first stage of civil war primarily waged by medley of left organisations on one side and Phalangist militia units on the other. PLO participation restrained and based on cooperation with Lebanese Government to arrange ceasefires.

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1976 Palestinian role in war increases as result of concerted reactionary assaults. Syria decides its own interests dictate direct involvement in Lebanon.

4 January Phalangists and other Christian militia units blockade Palestinian refugee camps of Tel-Al-Zaatar and Jisr-Al-Pasha. PLO enters fighting on larger scale.

18 January Phalangists commit 'Qarantina Massacre' of entire Moslem suburb.

19 January 5-8,000 Palestine Liberation Army troops under Syrian control enter Lebanon. The PLA is a Syrian trained all-Palestinian army.

26 February Salah Khalaf (second in command of Fatah after Arafat) reasserts PLO's position: 'We do not want anything from Lebanon, not even our activity from the south of the country We are willing to give this up What we really want is to be allowed to exercise our political and information activities in Lebanon.'

MARCH 1976 Left-Palestinian axis makes military gains. Syrian intervention on behalf of President Franjeh. Army rebellion led by Ahmed Al-Khatib leads to formation of 'Army of Arab Lebanon' which sides with the leftist coalition. Collapse of organised government.

11 March General Ahdab attempts coup demanding resignation of President Franjeh, who refuses and takes refuge in presidential palace. Ahdab operation collapses and Syria supports Franjeh.

20 March Left coalition launches military offensive ousting Phalangists from Holiday Inn on the following day.

25 March Franjeh, driven out of presidential palace, takes refuge in right-wing stronghold of Junieh. Syria uses PLA to intervene on behalf of Franjeh.

8 April Syria blockades Lebanese ports preventing arms and supplies to left. Syrian soldiers dressed as members of Palestinian organisation of 'Saiqa' enter Lebanon in large numbers.

MAY-JUNE 1976 Heavy fighting. Christian forces make appeals to Syrians who send armoured regiments of regular Syrian troops. Direct Syrian military intervention follows decision by Assad to extend UN forces mandate on the Golan. Despite fierce resistance from the Palestinians, the left coalition begins gradual military retreat, bringing to an end the second stage of the civil war characterised by relative advance of the Left-Palestinian coalition.

8 May Syrian-sponsored Elias Sarkis, former governor of Bank of Lebanon, is elected successor to President Franjeh.

1 June Syrian troop and tank reinforcements enter Lebanon, bringing total Syrian

6-7 June Syrian army launches all-out offensive to control approaches to Beirut and mountain ranges in East and North-East. Heavy losses for Syrians in Sidon. Syrian advance stopped 12 miles from Beirut. Libyan premier Jalloud medlates ceasefire. 'Token' Arab League 'peace-keeping' force arrives in Beirut. Franjeh and Christian-Right oppose Arab League intervention.

8-10 June Arab League attempts fail. Heavy fighting erupts. Iraq puts pressure on Syria's eastern flank.

12 June Libyan mediator Jalloud announces seven-point agreement between Syria and Palestinians. Its basis: limited Syrian withdrawal with Syrian troops being replaced by Arab League troops. Simultaneously Jalloud admits Libyan contingent of Arab League force is 'token', composed of 'tens of men'.

22 June Christian-Right forces launch all-out offensive in Beirut and against Palestinian camps of Tel-Al-Zaatar and Jisr-Al-Pasha. Offensive coincides with beginning of Syrian withdrawal from outskirts of Beirut in accordance with seven-point agreement.

23 June Heaviest artillery bombardment of entire war falls on besieged camps. Right wing demands unconditional surrender, threatening liquidation of inhabitants. Palestinian-Left respond that if the camps fall they will wage an 'all-out war'. Phalangists join other right-wing forces in battle for refugee camps. Syrians send in another tank column and 4,000 troops to Lebanon. They launch a combined offensive with the right wing against Palestinian-Left positions.

28 June Jisr-Al-Pasha falls, inaugurating a period of uninterrupted military defeats for Palestinian and Left forces.

30 June The battle for Tel-Al-Zaatar becomes focus of war. Original population of this refugee camp was 40,000. By middle of July it has been reduced to about 10,000.

JULY-AUGUST 1976 After bitter siege and heroic stand of the Palestinian resistance, the camp falls.

12 August



SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1976

15 September

23 September

27 September

28 September

12 October

15 October

16 October

17-18 OCTOBER 1976

Thousands of rotting corpses are noted by journalists. Barbaric massacres of remaining defenders take place.

Palestinian-Left defeats continue uninterruptedly culminating in Syrian ceasefire and Riyadh Arab summit.

Reports of build-up of Syrian network of SAM-6 and -7 missile systems in western Bekaa region of Lebanon, 13 miles from Israeli border, filling up an important gap in Syria's missile defence system vis-a-vis Israel.

Elias Sarkis inaugurated president following several weeks of political skirmishing.

Military clashes escalate in Beirut opening up new round of fighting.

Syrian army launches offensive on Palestinian-Left positions in the mountainous region east of Beirut. At least three key towns fall to the Syrians by 30 September. New round of Syrian-Palestinian negotiations follow upon these defeats.

Syrian army launches another offensive on Palestinian-Left positions south-east of Beirut.

Saudi Arabia calls for Arab mini-summit in Riyadh following Egyptian threat to intervene militarily in Lebanon.

Syrians announce a ceasefire. Hard pressed Palestinians welcome summit.

The Riyadh Arab summit results in: formal Egyptian-Syrian rapprochement; decision to increase Arab League forces to 30,000 on the understanding Syrian troops would make up half the 'peace-keeping force'; strict Palestinian adherence to 1969 Cairo Accords including restrictive amendments disarming the Palestinians outside the camps and limiting them to small arms inside. These terms imply Palestinian concessions on critical question of withdrawal of Syrian troops as precondition to final settlement of civil war. PLO leaders present the summit results as a setback for Syrian intentions in the civil war. Syria sees the summit as an Arab endorsement of its policy. Right-wing Christian leaders express reservations.



19 OCTOBER-15 NOVEMBER 1976

Uneasy period of implementation of Riyadh summit results. Israeli-Right collusion in south of Lebanon. Opening up of rift in relations between Syrians and Christian-Right. Change in Syrian tactics vis-a-vis Palestinians, who start to evacuate forces from strategic mountain areas around Beirut, weakening disastrously the position of their left allies.

19-24 October

Christian forces in south backed by Israelis launch offensive capturing strategic town of Marjeyoun. Israelis donate tanks and artillery to Christian forces, whose new found strength in region undermines implementation of 1969 Cairo Accords, and therefore the results of the Riyadh mini-summit.

25 October

Full scale summit of Arab heads of state endorses Riyadh summit agreement. Iraq condemns the agreement. Meanwhile war in south of Lebanon escalates with mass exodus of population and more direct intervention by Israeli troops.

26 October

Syria decides to allow Palestine to open supply lines to south of Lebanon. Christian-Right leaders deny cooperation with Israel, but signs of rift with Syria begin to appear.

27 October

Syria allows Palestinian reinforcements to enter Bekaa valley on way to south of Lebanon.

28 October

Israeli spokesmen state their opposition to return of Palestinian guerrillas to south of Lebanon. Palestinians begin to withdraw from strategic mountain areas around Sidon in accordance with Riyadh summit decisions. Lebanon left weakened. Palestinian military spokesmen declare two-thirds of their forces have been transferred to the south.

29 October

Syrians redirect some rocket batteries onto Christian-Right positions.

2 November

Christian-Right leaders appear to accept the principle of Arab League troops entering territories held by them. New reports state that Syrian troops will now constitute 75% of Arab League force. Uneasy truce in south prevails with Right refusing to allow Palestinian return to south.

11 November

Egyptian official states: 'The Palestinians will do nothing to upset the peace plan by provoking Israel'. Israeli Government officially states for the first time that the PLO may be set on a course towards a peaceful settlement. Syrian troops which had entered Beirut on 10 November begin to disarm the militias and take down the barricades. The situation in the south remains uneasy.

15 November

Syrian troops completely occupy the



SYRIA AND THE PALESTINIANS

Syrian-Palestinian relations have evolved considerably in the course of the Lebanon civil war. The calendar of events reveals four distinct stages.

From April 1975 to the end of the year, neither the Palestinian Liberation Organisation nor the Syrian regime put themselves at the centre of the Lebanese events. In fact the Sinai accords of September 1975 brought them closer together in common opposition to the Egyptian settlement with Israel.

The second stage of the war, from January 1976 to June and the Syrian invasion, was marked by three important changes: the PLO, despite themselves, were being dragged into the war as the rightist Christian militia launched attack after attack on the Palestinian refugee camps; the joint Palestinian-Lebanese left forces made significant gains culminating in their assault on the presidential palace and Franjeh's flight to Junieh; and finally the Syrians, in reaction to the Palestinian-left advance, supported Franjeh, blockaded supplies, and used the misnamed Palestine Liberation Army and Saiqa (a Syrian-sponsored Palestinian organisation) as their armed instruments inside Lebanon.

The third stage of the war was decisive from the military point of view. The Syrian army, in coordination with the Right-Christian militia, inflicted defeat after defeat on both the PLO and the left. By October 1976, the PLO had been thoroughly trounced, and its leadership was now ready to follow the dictates of Syrian policy.

The fourth stage of the war is still in the process of translating the results of the third into political terms. The Riyadh Arab mini-summit has resulted in Egyptian and Saudi approval of the Syrian role in Lebanon, and the PLO has conceded defeat by no longer insisting on Syrian withdrawal as the precondition for a settlement of the war.

STRANDED

The PLO is withdrawing from strategic military locations in the mountains around Beirut, heading for their camps in the South. Their left allies are stranded in a hopeless military position. The Syrian army has just occupied Beirut.

The Right-Christian militia — now with Israeli assistance — is poised to attack Palestinian positions in the South. The Christian/Syrian alliance is showing the first signs of breaking up.

This 20 month evolution of the civil war must be set against the political climate in the Middle East following the October 1973 war, and more particularly the October 1975 Sinai records. The main feature of these accords was the elimination of Egypt as a potential military threat to Israel, in return for a partial Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Sinai peninsula.

Syria's negotiating strength was sapped by this agreement. The Israelis hardened on the question of returning any part of the Golan Heights, occupied in 1967. Syrian diplomacy veered sharply in the direction of improving its bargaining position vis-a-vis the Zionist state.

The skilfully managed steps that were taken in this regard by the Syrian regime before the civil war included: an improvement of Syrian relations with American imperialism, despite sharp denunciations of Egypt and the Sinai accords; a Syrian sponsored 'Eastern Front' policy based on close collaboration with Jordan and the PLO, including the extension of an

the PLO at the October 1974 Rabat Arab Summit conference and, later on, in the period around the Sinai accords.

The object of Syrian diplomacy was to compensate in various directions for the 'loss' of Egypt in September 1975.

The steady escalation of the Lebanese civil war, which had become obvious by the beginning of 1976, took the Syrians by surprise as much as it did the Palestinians. The triggering mechanism of the fighting in the early stages was the frenzied attacks of the Christian Right.

The latter's objective has consistently been the destruction of an organised Palestinian presence in Lebanon. Politically they have expressed this in their unconditional rejection of the 1969 Cairo Agreements, which gave Arab 'legitimisation' to a regulated Palestinian presence on Lebanese territory. A useful analogy can be drawn between the Rightist position and that of King Hussein of Jordan in ('Black') September 1970.

SUBTLE

The Syrian intervention against the PLO, however, is a far more subtle and complex phenomenon. In the first stage of the war the Syrians were adjusting to a new situation, the implications of which they did not yet quite understand.

The Syrian rift with the PLO began only after the first indications of Palestinian-left advances on the battlefield. Even then the Syrian regime did not immediately send in troops. They backed the beleaguered Franjeh. They blockaded supplies and ammunition and infiltrated PLA and Saiqa units. Only after the failure of these manoeuvres were Syrian troops sent in.

The balance of power in Lebanon was therefore a critical factor in the Syrian decision to send troops. A shift in the relationship of forces to the advantage of the Palestinian-left coalition damaged long-term Syrian aims.

SPEAKING TOUR with leading Lebanese Trotskyist—further details from IMG, 01-278 9526.

MONDAY 29 Nov.

Swansea, evening

TUESDAY 30 Nov.

Bristol, lunchtime; Cardiff, evening

WEDNESDAY 1 Dec.

Leeds, lunchtime; Nottingham, evening

THURSDAY 2 Dec.

Birmingham, evening

FRIDAY 3 Dec.

Manchester, lunchtime; Liverpool, evening

MONDAY 6 Dec.

Oxford, lunchtime; Brunel University, evening

TUESDAY 7 Dec.

Sussex University, lunchtime; LSE (Old Theatre), evening

WEDNESDAY 8 Dec.

Cambridge, evening

Red Weekly is also supporting the solidarity week organised by LSE students: Thurs 25 Nov, cultural evening, 7pm; Fri 26 Nov, solidarity meeting, 7pm—both at LSE, Houghton St, WC2. Also demonstration, Sun 28 Nov, assembly 1pm

A victory for the Palestinian-left in Lebanon would have led to a change in the balance of forces throughout the Middle East. It would have brought to an end the relative decline in the mass movement following the September 1970 defeat. The consequences for the entire regime would have been explosive.

Syrian relations with the USA and Jordan, including its settlement prospects with Israel, would have been dealt a severe blow. The internal stability of the Assad regime would have been put in question. Finally, the moderate pro-Syrian wing of the leadership of the Palestinian resistance would have lost ground to the hard-line 'Rejection Front' on its left. This was already becoming apparent by the end of the first stage of the civil war.

Syrian interests therefore meant that it was necessary to roll back the left advance at all costs. The support to Franjeh, the blockades, and the invasion were simply the means towards this end. By the end of the third stage of the war, this and much more had been accomplished. The PLO had been defeated on the battlefield by the Syrian army.

RELATIONS

This has qualitatively transformed Syrian-Palestinian relations. There can be no going back to the September 1975 'common understanding' on the matter of opposition to the Sinai accords. Today the Syrian regime is in a position to dictate its policy to the Palestinian resistance movement.

The Syrian-dominated 'Eastern Front' policy has now extended to embrace Lebanon and effective Syrian control of the PLO. There are reports that as early as September 1976 the Syrians began to extend their missile defence system into Lebanon, just as they did in Jordan.

The PLO is being sent to its southern bases in Lebanon where it will act as a Syrian-controlled 'buffer zone' in the coming negotiations for a Syrian settlement with the Zionist state modelled after the Sinai accords. The Syrian regime has

emerged from this war in a much stronger position to bargain with the Zionist state. It has acquired this strength from its proven ability to control the development of events in Lebanon.

POLICY

This policy has to be strictly differentiated from that of the Christian-Right bloc. The latter's relief at Syrian help in defeating the PLO is today being tempered with the knowledge that the Syrians intend to use the PLO for their own purposes. The Syrians do not, at this stage at least, want the destruction of any organised Palestinian presence in Lebanon.

These differences are expressed in two opposing positions on the 1969 Cairo Agreement. The recent Riyadh and Cairo Arab summits in October 1976 established not only Arab acceptance of the Syrian role in Lebanon, but also Palestinian adherence to a strict interpretation of the 1969 Cairo Agreement.

The Syrians have placed special emphasis on the implementation of these accords by insisting upon and facilitating the transfer of Palestinian militia units to bases in the south. The Christian-Right, with overt Israeli assistance, have tried to block this development and touch off another round of fighting. So far they have not succeeded, and the Arab/Syrian plan is gradually being implemented.

This is opening up a political divide between the Christian-Right and the Syrian regime which could become more important in the near future. If the Right continues its attacks on the Palestinians in the south, an active Syrian military intervention should not be excluded.

The prospects for Arab revolutionaries which result from this development of events in Lebanon are not encouraging. The mass movement has been curbed and controlled. But it has not yet been disarmed or smashed. To accomplish this will prove to be a much harder nut for the Arab bourgeoisie to crack.

M. JAAFAR



QUEBEC - Nationalists no solution

THE SURPRISING and sweeping victory of the Parti Quebecois (PQ) in the Quebec provincial elections last week was the fruit of two centuries of colonialist, imperialist and capitalist manoeuvres.

Ever since Quebec was conquered in 1759, the strategy adopted first by Britain and then by the Canadian capitalist class has centred on a deal with the traditional ruling groups of Quebec society.

The people of Quebec paid the price for this deal — the continuing domination of the most backward social forces over their lives and the corresponding relative backwardness of their economic and social development. Today, for example, this is reflected in an unemployment rate of more than 10 per cent. But there was another side to the coin — the preservation of the distinctive national character of the people of Quebec.

The rapid growth of the North American economy after the Second World War began to dissolve the old social institutions that had underlain the domination of reactionary groups, and thus created an explosive situation.

Increasingly the fight for national rights became tied up with the discontent of the exploited groups, and in particular of the working class. Moreover the Quebec working class was rapidly becoming the most militant in North America, its struggles surpassing even the heroic battles of the US working class in the 1930s.

But this economic militancy of the working class has not found its political expression — an area where the historic backwardness of Quebec continues to exert its dead weight. There is not even a serious social democratic party in the province, and the petty bourgeois adventurers of the PQ have therefore been able to capitalise upon working class discontent.

Taking advantage of an archaic electoral system which kept reactionary parties in power for so long, the PQ has managed to sweep to power with a large parliamentary majority but only 41 per cent of the popular vote. Their victory was based on a demagogic opposition to high unemployment and the corrupt wastefulness of the Olympic Games.

Clearly the PQ does not represent any serious way forward for the workers of Quebec, but its victory is still a development of the first importance. It is already beginning to soft-pedal those of its policies that are most objectionable to the Canadian capitalists — such as its promised referendum on independence.

It will take no more than a few years of government by this bankrupt clique for it to be exposed to the Quebec workers for what it is, creating the basis for the working class to shed its political backwardness and transfer its economic militancy onto the political terrain.

In this turbulent situation a major role will be played by the Canadian supporters of the Fourth International, who have distinguished themselves through their active involvement in the major national struggles in Quebec and their intransigent defence of the right of self-determination of the Quebec people.

VENEZUELA - A DEMOCRATIC OASIS?

President Perez of Venezuela, on a visit to Britain this week has been hailed by the press as the representative of 'an oasis of democratic enlightenment'. There have been calls for a big effort by the Labour Government to make Perez welcome and in fact to encourage the affiliation of Venezuela's ruling party, Acción Democrática, to the Socialist International to which the Labour Party is affiliated.

The real reason for this enthusiasm was put more honestly by Foreign Office Minister Ted Rowlands, who said that it 'could result in substantially increased trade.'

Although Venezuela is clearly not Pinochet's Chile or Videla's Argentina, the economic and political situation is not that rosy for the popular masses. Behind the facade of parliamentary democracy the reality for the working people of Venezuela is one of hunger, unemployment and repression.

A recent example of this situation was the murder under police torture of Jorge Rodríguez, leader of the Liga Socialista (Socialist League — Venezuelan section of the Fourth International). Our comrades have launched a vigorous campaign for democratic rights and as part of our solidarity with the revolutionary forces of Venezuela we call on Labour Party members in particular to denounce the true nature of this 'oasis of democracy'.

RED WEEKLY

Two images of Jamaica

JAMAICA hit the news twice last week. First came the deportation order served on Philip Agee only days after he had revealed details of the massive increase in CIA activity on the island. The second occasion was the crowning of yet another Caribbean representative, Jamaican Cindy Breakspere, in Mecca's Miss World contest.

The two are not unconnected. Agee's revelations rip the covers right off the 'sand, sea, sex and sunshine' image of Jamaica which Cindy's promoters want her to sell for them.

The Jamaican Government, however, does not seem particularly concerned to disavow this image. Despite its alleged support for African liberation struggles, it was noticeably not among those governments which protested the blatant apartheid of the two South African entries — one black, one white.

Of course, organiser Julia Morley means that 'it's a non-political contest'. Could she perhaps rephrase that to 'politics won't stop me lining my own and Mecca's pockets'? Or better still, as was evident from the examples of Western 'beauty' lined up for show last Thursday (including Miss Jamaica herself) — 'It's a white man's capitalist world; so who

pays the piper, calls the tune'.

Agee has previously shown that this guiding principle is shared by US intelligence, whose hideous 'successes' have been written up in blood throughout Latin America. Quite a bit is also known about both US and British intervention in the Caribbean — from Cuba to Santo Domingo to Trinidad, Guyana, Anguilla.....

His naming of nine CIA agents operating in Jamaica and the revelation that millions of dollars have been paid to arm opposition thugs to burn, shoot and murder in Kingston add another country to the list. Jamaican prime minister Manley, with an economic crisis also on his hands, has responded to the gunmen by declaring a State of Emergency involving nightly curfews, the banning of meetings and demonstrations, press censorship, and detention without trial.

In this atmosphere a general election is scheduled for 14 December — by which time imperialist interests hope that the present regime may be sufficiently discredited to make way for a stooge regime more amenable to US capital. That's the way 'destabilisation' works at its smoothest. Only this time it may not.

ZIMBABWE: CONFERENCE GRINDS ON

After anxiety in the bourgeois press that the Geneva constitutional conference on Zimbabwe might break down, the Patriotic Front delegation has made clear its desire to continue the conference.

The dispute over the independence date has brought the splits between the African nationalist leaders into the open. The position of all the nationalist delegations was for a 12 month timetable, as opposed to the 15 month minimum proposed by the British. But the delegations of Bishop Muzorewa and Rev. Sithole have shown their readiness to back down.

The Smith Government has stated that it will be quite happy to continue negotiating with these two, and Sithole in particular has found a place as British imperialism's favourite child. Unfortunately for them he is the nationalist leader with the least social base inside Zimbabwe.

But the 'no compromise' position of the Patriotic Front — led by Robert Mugabe (ZANU) and Joshua Nkomo (ZAPU) — is hardly principled politics either. Already a 12 month independence timetable is 12 months longer than that demanded by the Zimbabwean guerrillas. It is with this in mind that Mugabe, the most radical of the leaders at Geneva, has balked at any further compromise.

Mugabe's more moderate partner, Nkomo, is being dragged along behind in this apparently intransigent stance. However, a ZAPU spokesperson has announced: 'There is no question of a walk-out. We do not want to cripple the

conference.' Indeed both Nkomo and Mugabe have committed themselves to a neo-colonial solution for Zimbabwe, which means that they have to stay until they can deliver the goods to the Zimbabwean people in an apparently acceptable form.

TASK

In this context it remains the central task of revolutionaries to demand the boycott of a conference which can only continue imperialist domination in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwean people have shown that they do not accept the neo-colonial 'timetables' for independence. The slogan must be 'Majority Rule Now', based on a Constituent Assembly of the Zimbabwean people.

In the same week that the Sunday Times revealed details of how US imperialism plans to get its greedy hands on Namibia's wealth, black workers have struck against a major representative of British business interests in southern Africa.

Damara workers at the Rossing Uranium mine in Namibia, partly owned by Rio Tinto Zinc, have gone on strike against their sub-human working conditions. Despite management attempts to make out that it was a 'minor food dispute', it has become clear that the 500-700

workers have far wider demands than just bad food.

It is certain that the dispute involves far-reaching pay demands, and it seems likely that it is the first in a series of national strikes against the continued South African occupation of Namibia and the support given to it by European and American imperialism.

Solidarity with the Rossing Uranium workers is an important task to be taken up by the Anti-Apartheid Day of Action on 4 December. This should be a step forward in the campaign to break the collusion of British big business and the Labour Government with the apartheid regime.

The Anti-Apartheid Movement has called a day of action on 4 December in solidarity with the liberation struggles of southern Africa and to force the Labour Government to break all links with the racist regimes. Activities are being organised in many areas.

The previous day, a full programme of discussion has been organised at the London School of Economics in the Old Theatre, Houghton Street. It starts at 10.30 a.m. with two plenary sessions on 'The political economy of apartheid' and 'International dimensions of the southern Africa conflict'; then at 1.30 p.m. there is a solidarity meeting with Nkosazana Dlamini (SASO), Aziz Bhad (ANC), Peter Katjavivi (SWAPO) and a Patriotic Front speaker; at 4 p.m. the Granada film 'South Africa — there is no crisis' will be shown; and finally at 7 p.m. there will be music with Louis Maholo.

'All brothers' in Spain



Jack Jones, Len Murray and other TUC worthies have just returned from a visit to Spain to promote the Socialist Party's trade union adjunct, the UGT.

Great stress has been laid on the emotional significance of the visit for International Brigade veteran Jack Jones. More important, however, is the specific intervention which this visit made into the politics of the Spanish workers movement. This comes at a time when the political options of the PSOE (Socialist Party) and the UGT are narrowing.

The government reform plan supported by the Cortes last week poses for the PSOE the problem of how to give support to the Government without losing its base in the working class. The UGT, similarly, has been growing far more slowly than the other union organisations.

The TUC delegation was a deliberate attempt to put the weight of international reformism behind these ailing bodies. As Murray puts it: 'This visit is a symbol of our support for the socialist UGT and its members.' He also attempted to resolve the PSOE's political problems by announcing that democracy 'is firmly on the agenda.'

But it was Jack Jones who was the real show-piece. 'We are all brothers now', he proclaimed, embracing a Francoist veteran, while talking about the 'evidence of freedom' in Spain today.

This is just what the UGT wanted. Jones and his friends only spoke to meetings of the UGT and the STV, the trade union wing of the bourgeois Basque Nationalist Party. By simply ignoring the Workers Commissions and the other mass

organisations of the Spanish working class, Jones was able to dodge the problem of how the social democrats should respond to the Government's failure to legalise organisations representing the vast bulk of the workers movement.

This was a diplomatic way out of a tricky situation, but it does not begin to answer the question of how to build solidarity in Britain with all the organisations of the Spanish working class.

SOLIDARITY

Any solidarity movement must start from the fact that the present reforms are no more than window-dressing on the old Francoist regime. The regime and the Common Market governments want the PSOE and UGT to legitimise these 'reforms' in the eyes of Spanish and European workers.

By giving sectarian support to these organisations alone, Jones and Murray are playing the Social Contract game all over again. They, too, are trying to legitimise the orderly transition to a strong state in which the political organisations of the working class will continue to suffer the utmost repression.

The fight for solidarity in the British labour movement will be a fight against the sectarian plans of the TUC leaders.

Next week: a militant of the LCR (Spanish sympathising organisation of the Fourth International) discusses the recent



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